

THE
CHILD'S FRIEND.

VOL. V.

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NO. 4.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

TO MY YOUNG READERS.

A happy new year! From my heart I wish all my young readers a happy new year!

At this time last year, winter with his cold white sparkling mantle, and his scanty evergreen wreath, began the circle of the seasons: timidly with her crown of snow-drops on her head, scattering her wind flowers and her blushing roses, spring took his place. Then came summer with her glowing heats, and her gorgeous flowers, and her refreshing fruits, and her solemn thunder and dazzling lightnings; then followed autumn with her ripened yellow sheaves and her bounteous harvests enriched with the gathered spoil of all her sisters, and decked out in her many colored coat. These hand in hand have passed before us, and here again is winter, all sparkling with jewels, and looking so bright and beautiful, that while we shiver at his chilling breath, our hearts dance with delight at his unspeakable magnificence.

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The very stars seem to sparkle with new lustre, as they look down upon the glistening earth, and the moon seems to vie with the sun when he sets, as she lights up the glorious scene. Not a single twig or blade of grass, not a small stone but is tricked out with jewels and has on its glittering coronal of rubies, or dazzling pendant of diamonds and pearls.

A Happy New Year laughs out from the cold, dazzling winter scene around us: but not to all, alas! not to all: there are many too cold to see any beauty in winter, many too sorrowful to find any pleasure in looking at her brilliant icy jewels: to them her white dress looks like a winding sheet; they find her dark grey mantle more congenial to their souls, for there seems to their gloomy hearts more of sympathy in it. The flowers of spring have never smiled for them, the summer has not cheered or comforted them, the autumn has not enriched them, nor sung sweet music through the stiffening branches of the forest to their ears; and now winter comes with her cold dazzling splendor as if in mockery of their sadness, and it seems to them as they stand in their rags, shivering with cold and hunger, as if his wild, pitiless storms, and fierce winds, and gloomy clouds, and bitter cold, would destroy them. He is to them only an enemy. You to whom the circle of the seasons has only been a change of pleasures, upon whom each has smiled as it passed, and who wrapped up in your warm clothing welcome 'winter wild,' you who, well fed and well cared for, are moving in an atmosphere of love and plenty—Go to those poor outcasts, and bid 'Happy new year' to them; give them of your abundance; make the world, for one brief moment at least, look beautiful to them;

and let the hour be a prophecy to their hearts of a happy new year.

Say not, I have nothing to give—Be beggars for those poor sufferers, ask of those who have, for those who have not. Pray for the privilege of giving to those who are in want, of being God's almoners. That little trembling bare-footed boy is your own brother; take him by the hand and be kind to him, and give him shoes, and feed him. That pale, sick woman is your mother; take care of her, watch by her sick bed, get her such aid as she needs. There is enough in God's plentiful world for all, and good hearts to bestow of their abundance. Hear the words of that little girl; she asks for warm clothes, for instruction, for healthful employment; take her to your mother, tell her she is your sister, and that she must help her, and let her be her child. Remember then all those to whom on this day the words "Happy new year" bring no hope or joy, whose first thought, perhaps, is, 'Wretched new year,' whose prayer to God is, that they may be saved from the evil that is to come, from cold, starvation, and such sorrows as your young hearts can know nothing of.

Consecrate this day, then, my young friends, to the brightest joy that life can give, such as Jesus knew and taught, the happiness of doing good, of relieving suffering, of lighting up the smile of joy in the face of some of the sufferers in this world, of comforting some of those children of God who seem to be the forgotten ones in his great family. Their hearts would leap for joy at the hope of a happy new year. Make one for them, or at least try to do so. A happy new year for yourself will then doubtless come unthought of, unbidden; but what

though it should not, that is not your care. God's year has no end. Do right, and leave all to Him. He is the Father of all. Be you his ministers. E. L. F.

I DARE NOT SCORN.

BY ROBERT NICOLL.

I MAY not scorn the meanest thing
That on the earth doth crawl,
The slave who dares not burst his chain,
The tyrant in his hall.

The vile oppressor who hath made
The widow'd mother mourn,
Though worthless—soulless he may stand—
I cannot—DARE not scorn.

The darkest night that shrouds the sky,
Of beauty hath a share ;
The blackest heart hath signs to tell
That God still lingers there.

I pity all that evil are—
I pity and I mourn ;
But the Supreme hath fashioned all—
And, oh ! I DARE not scorn.

MARTYRS.

HUSS.

[Continued from page 104.]

SIGISMUND, brother of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, had just ascended the throne of Hungary. This prince was a zealous catholic, and devoted himself to the defence of the church. He was greatly shocked at the deplorable state in which he found it. John XXIII. had been elected pope in place of the other two, but they refused to resign their authority, and so, as we have seen, there were at this time three popes—John XXIII. at Bologna, Gregory XII. at Rimini, and Benedict XIII. in Arragon—of course all issuing bulls against each other, and each one calling himself the supreme and infallible head of the church.

The emperor Sigismund, though a great bigot, was a man of sense and refinement, and of literary taste and generous feeling. It is related of him that when he had bestowed a title of nobility upon some learned man, and in the procession which took place after the ceremony, observed that the new Doctor chose to walk with the nobility rather than among his learned brethren, the emperor said to him, "Do not diminish a body which it is not in my power to replenish; the corps you have joined I can augment when I please."

The emperor attributed the disorders in the church to the spread of the new doctrines as much as to the quarrels and division among its heads, and he believed that by calling a general council, to put down schism and suppress heresy, all would be well again in the church.

He therefore caused a grand council of all Christendom to be summoned to meet in the imperial city of Constance. All the princes and nobility as well as all the dignitaries of the church were invited. The three popes, but most especially John XXIII., whose infamous character and greater power made him the most obnoxious, in short all men of any distinction, were called upon to come to the grand council at Constance. Sigismund as emperor and as devotee hated all independence of opinion and fixed his thoughts upon John Huss, who he knew not only thought but spoke freely what he thought. He, in the emperor's opinion represented in his own person all the innovation of Europe. Accordingly he was summoned to appear before this council.

A melancholy foreboding of coming evil took possession of the mind of Huss when he received the summons to appear before the council of Constance. But he neglected no means of defence, and his heart was strong in his innocence. A few days before he left, he affixed a paper to the gates of the palace announcing his intended departure, and calling upon any one who suspected him of heresy to proceed to the council and accuse him there, and declaring that if any one could convict him of having taught anything against the christian faith, he would consent to undergo all the penalties to which heretics are liable.

Huss then publicly announced that he was ready to render an account of his faith in presence of the archbishop and clergy, and demanded a certificate of orthodoxy from the archbishop, and strange as it may seem he obtained it. He then demanded permission to appear before a general assembly of the clergy of Prague presided

over by the archbishop ; but this was refused, and he was advised to get purged of the excommunication under which he then suffered. Huss then offered to establish his innocence by the scriptures, by the holy canons of the church, and by the fathers, but they refused.

It is probable that the archbishop in his apparent indulgence to Huss in giving him the certificate of orthodoxy, wished only to facilitate his journey to Constance, and to get him into the hands of those who would deal more effectually with him than he could. But the strange thing is that Huss should have thought himself entitled to it. The only explanation of this is, that he thought he had preached, not against the true catholic church, but its abuses merely.

In the month of October 1414, Huss bade adieu to his beloved chapel where his voice was to be no more heard, and to his friends and disciples. To leave his faithful, loving friend Jerome was very affecting to him. "Dear master," said Jerome to him, "be firm ; maintain intrepidly what thou hast written and preached against the pride, avarice and other vices of the churchmen, with arguments drawn from the holy scriptures. Should this task become too severe for thee, should I learn that thou hast fallen into any peril, I shall fly forthwith to thy assistance." Huss then departed from Prague with a passport from king Wenceslaus, and one from the emperor in which he desired every one to assist John Huss on his journey, and furnish him with all he wanted ; and in which he gave him leave to stop on his way, and permission to return freely and safely. You will see how well the emperor kept his royal word ; he was a religious bigot, and when was it that religious bigotry did not dull

the moral sense? Huss showed by his letters to his friends before his departure that he did not deceive himself with regard to the dangers he incurred in going to Constance; he tells them that he knew he was to meet his mortal enemies. He asks them to pray for him that God would give him wisdom, and that He would fortify him so that he might face with courage, temptation, the prison, and if necessary a cruel death; and that if he should return to them he might return without stain. He also urges them to beware of vanity and worldly-mindedness, and not to imitate him in any of his weaknesses or faults. "Beware" he says, "of adorning thy house more than thy soul; give all thy care to the spiritual edifice." He gives them more of such good advice, and ends with making some bequests to them and disposing of his possessions by will, and writes on the back of the letter, "I conjure thee, my friend, not to break this seal until thou shalt have acquired the certitude that I am dead."

From this time it seemed as if Huss turned a deaf ear to every voice but that secret, still, silent one which ever speaks to the true and faithful heart, and which seems to gain strength in proportion to our attention to its warnings. And now imagine two men at the same time on their way to the great council of Constance, whose appearance and condition formed a very striking contrast. One was pope John travelling in all the pomp and style he could assume in order to maintain his dignity and state, taking the circumstance of the upsetting of his carriage for an ill omen, and trembling at the conviction that the superb robes and consecrated mitre of the pontiff could not still the throbbings of the fearful heart of the guilty man.

The other was the slight-made excommunicated priest quietly travelling on a mule with the two faithful friends by his side who would not forsake him whom they loved and honored in the hour of danger. His heart also prophesied to him of coming danger, perhaps death ; but he feared not, for he was innocent and trusted in God and rejoiced in the thought that he could not go where He was not, and so his spirit found peace, and the glorious mountains "looking tranquillity" piercing the blue heavens with their sharp, glittering, icy spires, all spoke to him of the eternal happy home of the good, brave man.

But besides this inward peace John Huss received outward testimony to his excellent character. It is said that he was astonished at the honor he met with ; as he passed through the cities, the streets were lined with people who came out to pay their respects to him, and he travelled through Germany in a kind of triumph. "I thought" he said, "that I had been an outcast, but now I see that my worst enemies are in Bohemia." At Nuremburgh especially, the magistrates waited upon him and expressed to him their convictions that the council would dismiss him with honor. This shows that the Germans were prepared for the reformation ; this took place one hundred years before Luther.

In every important city through which he passed Huss put up a notice saying that John Huss was on his journey to Constance there to defend his faith, which by God's help he would defend unto death, and inviting all to come there who had aught to lay to his charge.

When Huss arrived at Constance he found assembled there, countless prelates, multitudes of clergymen and laymen, princes, dukes and lords without number, musi-

cians, and all sorts of people by thousands from England, France, Germany and Italy. He arrived on the 3d of November, and put up at the house of a poor widow whose name was Faith, whom he likens to the poor widow who received Elijah. The poor woman offered him a refuge for the time, but she had not the power long to protect him. For several days he remained unmolested. The barons John de Chlum and Henry de Latzemboch notified the pope John, who had also arrived, that Huss was in the city, and informed him that he had a safe conduct from the emperor. It is related to the honor of pope John that he replied, "If John Huss had killed his brother, he would most heartily prevent any injustice being done him while he was in the city of Constance." Huss therefore spoke and acted with a tolerable degree of freedom in the first days of his stay in Constance. He trusted in the emperor's safe conduct. He taught his doctrines in a room in his lodgings, where the people flocked to see and hear him. He was in hopes to be allowed to preach, and prepared two sermons for the purpose. He professed to believe in all the true doctrines of the catholic church, to trust in tradition and rest on the authority of the fathers; he maintained however, that the scriptures well understood were a sufficient rule of faith, and that this rule was quite sufficient for salvation; that the christian faith necessarily included all acts of obedience, and that a sinner was only a christian in name and could not recite the creed without falsehood. It is evident that the preachings of Huss were all levelled mainly at the immorality of the churchmen, at the lives and acts of the so called ministers of the gospel. Now as the church was very corrupt, we see

plainly why it was that the persecution of Huss was so virulent. Every corrupt man was of course his personal enemy.

Let us pause now for a moment before proceeding with the story of his sufferings, and take fully into our minds the position and conduct of John Huss at this time. There were collected in the city of Constance all the powerful representatives of the corrupt church he had spent his life in preaching against. There was the pope, John XXIII.; there was the bigoted but powerful emperor Sigismund; there were all the dignitaries of Europe, the more vicious the more like to be there in order to expiate their private sins by showing zeal for the public welfare. There in truth the selfish and vicious world that had been crying out against his heresies, and whose sins he had been uncovering and rebuking, were all congregated. And now let us look at Huss in the midst of them, strong only in his innocence and fearless devotion to truth, and in his faith in God, standing up alone amidst the multitude, surrounded by the pomp and power of this world, and simply but firmly speaking against wickedness in high places, declaring that no man was a Christian who did not follow Christ, that the only true faith was obedience and love, and that a sinner was only a christian in name. Do not our souls bow down with reverential love before this humble but glorious servant of God?

E. L. F.

[To be continued.]

THE belief in immortality depends on viriue; those only who by virtuous exertion are striving to overcome the world can be true believers in immortality.

C. FOLLEN.

THE ELVES.

FROM TIECK.

[Concluded from last Number.]

THEY passed through the bronze door of the palace. In a round hall there sat many beautiful women, old and young, feasting upon the most delicious fruits, whilst exquisite unseen music sounded. On the ceiling were painted palm-trees, flowers and foliage, among which children were climbing and swinging:—the figures changed according to the music, and glowed with the most vivid colours: at one time the green and blue shone like bright light, then the colour grew fainter, and purple and gold shone forth: then the naked children among the garlands appeared alive, and seemed to draw in and breathe out breath with their ruby lips, so that in turns their white teeth and the lighting up of their blue eyes were to be seen.

Bronze steps led from the hall to a great subterranean apartment. Here there lay a great deal of gold and silver, among which glittered precious stones of all colours. Curious vases stood round the walls, and seemed all to be filled with jewels. The gold was wrought into various shapes, and shone with the greatest brilliancy. A great many little dwarfs were busied in separating the various things and placing them in the vases; others, with hunch-backs, and crooked legs, and having long red noses, bore in with difficulty and bending forward, sacks, as the millers carry grain, and emptied out gold-dust on the floor, panting with exertion. Then they skipped clum-

sily about to the right and left, picking up the pieces which were rolling out of the way : and it often happened that one threw the other over in their haste, so that they fell heavily and awkwardly on the floor. They seemed put out when Maria laughed at their actions and their ugliness, and looked askance at her.

Behind these sat a little shrivelled-up old man, to whom Zerina courtsied respectfully, which he answered only with a grave nod of his head. He held a sceptre in his hand, and had a crown on his head ; and all the other dwarfs seemed to recognise him as their master and to obey his motions.

"What is the matter now?" said he gruffly, as the children came towards him. Maria was frightened, and did not speak, but her companions answered, that they had only come to see the chambers. "Always the old nonsense!" said the old man : "will there never be an end to this idleness?" So saying he turned away to his business again, of weighing and separating the pieces of gold : other dwarfs he sent away ; many he scolded angrily.

"Who is that gentleman?" asked Maria :—"Our Primer of the Metals," answered her companion as they walked on.

They seemed to come again into the open air, for they stood at a great pond, but there was no sun shining, and they could not see any sky above them. They got into a little skiff, and Zerina rowed very actively. The boat went very fast. When they came to the middle of the pond, Maria saw that a thousand pipes, canals, and rivulets spread out in every direction from the little lake. "That stream to the right," said the glittering child, "flows

down under your garden ; from that everything blossoms so beautifully :—here you go down into the great river.” Suddenly there came diving up out of all the canals and from the lake an innumerable quantity of children ; many of them wearing wreaths of sedge and water-lilies : others had pieces of red coral in their hands ; and others again were blowing crooked muscle-shells for trumpets. A confused noise resounded merrily from the dark shores ; among the children there swam about the most beautiful woman, and often a number of children would spring about from one to the other, and hang about their necks with kisses. They all welcomed the stranger ; and with this tumult they proceeded out of the lake into a little stream, which grew narrower and narrower. At last the skiff stopped. They took leave of the others, and Zerina knocked on the rock.

The rock opened like a door, and a female form, all red, helped them disembark.

“ Are they having a merry time of it ? ” asked Zerina.

“ They have just gone to work,” answered the other, “ and are as merry as they can be : and the heat too is very pleasant.”

They went up a spiral stair-case, and suddenly Maria found herself in a most splendid hall, so that as she entered her eyes were dazzled with the bright light. Tapestry of fiery red covered the walls with a purple glow, and as her eyes became accustomed to the light, she saw to her astonishment that figures were dancing up and down in the tapestry, with the greatest delight ; so beautifully formed and so exquisitely proportioned, that nothing could have a more graceful appearance :—their bodies appeared to be of reddish crystal, so that it seem-

ed as if the excited blood played visibly back and forth in them. They smiled on the stranger child, and greeted her with various motions, but when Maria wished to go nearer, Zerina pulled her suddenly back, and cried out: "You will burn yourself, Maria, for it is all fire!"

Maria felt the heat. "Why" said she, "do not those darling little creatures come out and play with us?"

"They have to remain in the fire," answered the other, "just as you have to remain in the air; and they would perish out here. Just see how they enjoy it, how they laugh and shout: those down there spread the streams of fire in every direction under the earth, and that makes the flowers, the fruits, and the vines grow: the red streams flow along with the streams of water, and thus these fiery creatures are always active and merry. But it is too hot here for you: we will go out into the garden again."

In the garden the scene was changed. The moonlight lay on all the flowers, the birds were silent, and the children were asleep in various groups in the green arbours. But Maria and her friend felt no weariness, but wandered about in the warm summer-night, talking of various things until morning.

When the day broke, they refreshed themselves with fruit and milk, and Maria said: "let us go to the fir-trees by way of a change, and see how it looks there."

"With all my heart," said Zerina, "and you can visit our sentinels there;—you will like to see them; they stand on the wall, among the trees."

They went through the flower-gardens: through pleasant shrubberies filled with nightingales: then they went through vineyards, and came at last, after following for a

long time the windings of a clear brook, to the fir-trees, and the hillock which made the boundary of their land.

"How comes it," said Maria, "that we have to walk so far here on the inside, when the distance round on the outside is so small?"

"I do not know how it happens," answered her friend, "but so it is."

They went up to the dark fir-trees, and a cold wind blew upon them from without; a mist seemed to cover the landscape to a great distance.

Curious figures were standing there, with faces as if sprinkled with flour, looking not unlike white owl-heads: they were clothed in loose cloaks of rough woollen, and held umbrellas of singular skins, spread over their heads: and they waved and fanned continually with bat-wings, which stuck strangely out from under their cloaks.

"I want to laugh, and yet I am afraid," said Maria.

"These are our good careful watchmen," said her little playfellow; "they stand here and wave their wings, so that terror and strange fears befall everyone who tries to come near us:—but they are wrapped up so, because it is cold and rainy, out there, and they do not like that. Here below, snow and rain never come, nor cold air; here it is always summer and spring: but if the watchmen up there were not relieved very often, they would perish."

"But who are you then," asked Maria, as they went down among the fragrant flowers;—"or have you no name by which you are known?"

"We are called Elves," said the pleasant child; "they talk about us in the world, as I have heard."

They heard a great tumult on the meadow. "The

beautiful bird is come !” cried out the children to them as they approached ; every one hastened into the hall. They saw already how young and old were crowding over the threshold ; all were rejoicing, and from within sounded joyful music. When they went in, they saw a great circular space filled with the most various forms, and all were looking up at a great bird with variegated plumage which was circling about slowly in the cupola.

The music sounded more merrily than ever, and the colours and lights changed more quickly. At last the music ceased, and the bird alighted on a glittering crown which hung beneath the high window that lighted the dome above. His feathers were purple and green, with the most splendid stripes of gold :—on his head waved a diadem of small feathers, so brilliant, that they flashed like precious stones. The bill was red, and his legs of splendid blue. As he moved, the colours were mixed together, in a manner wonderful to behold. His size was that of an eagle. But now he opened his shining beak, and a sweet melody flowed from his breast, in notes more musical than those of the amorous nightingale :—the song grew more powerful, and streamed out like rays of light, so that all, even the smallest children, wept with joy and delight. When he had finished, all bowed before him ; he flew round the dome again in circles, and then shot through the door and soared away into the bright sky, where he glittered still like a red point, and then disappeared from sight.

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“The King is coming!” said the little child;—“many of us have not seen him at all, and wherever he goes there is joy and happiness:—we have been long hoping he would come, more anxiously than you look for the spring, after a long winter, and now he has announced his coming, by this beautiful messenger. This splendid and wise bird, which is despatched in the service of the king, is called Phenix; he lives far away in Arabia, on a tree which is nowhere else to be found;—as indeed there is only one Phenix. When he feels himself growing old, he collects together a nest of balsam and frankincense, sets it on fire and burns himself. He dies singing, and from his odoriferous ashes the new Phenix arises in fresh beauty. He rarely takes his flight so as to be visible to men; and when once in centuries this happens, they write it in their books for remembrance, and expect wonderful events. But now, my friend, you must depart, for it is not permitted to you to see the king.”

Then the beautiful lady with the splendid dress came through the crowd, beckoned Maria to her, and went with her into a solitary arbour. “You must leave us, my dear child,” said she: “the King is to hold his court here for twenty years, and perhaps longer: and fruitfulness and prosperity will spread far over the country, but particularly in this neighbourhood, all the fountains and brooks will be fuller, all the fields and gardens more productive, the wine more excellent, the meadows richer, and the woods fresher and greener; the air will be milder, no hail-storms nor freshets will do any damage. Take this ring and remember us, but take care not to tell any one about us, else we shall be obliged to forsake the country, and all the inhabitants, as well as yourself will

be deprived of the benefit and blessing of our neighbourhood :—now kiss your play-fellow once more and then farewell.”

They came out, Zerina wept, Maria bent down to embrace her, and they parted. Already she stood on the narrow bridge, the cold air blew upon her from the fir-trees, the little dog barked with all his might, and made his little bell ring : she looked back, and hurried on into the open field, for the gloominess of the firs, the blackness of the ruined huts, and the dusky shadows overcame her with fear and uneasiness.

“How anxious my parents must have been last night!” said she to herself, as she stood in the field ;—“and yet I cannot tell where I have been, nor what I have seen : besides they never would believe me.”

Two men passed by and greeted her ; and she heard them say ; “What a pretty maiden ! Where can she come from ?” With hasty steps she approached her father’s house, but the trees, which the day before hung full of fruit, now stood dry and leafless : the house was painted differently, and a new barn built near it. Maria was astonished, and thought she was in a dream ; in this amazement she opened the door of the house, and at the table there sat her father between a woman whom she did not know, and a young man. “Good Heavens, father !” she cried, “where is mother ?”

“Mother ?” said the woman, wondering ; and she rushed forward :—“why you cannot be—yes, indeed, indeed you are my own dear Maria, who was lost, and whom we thought dead !” She had recognised her directly by a little brown mole under her chin, by her eyes and her shape. All embraced, all were transported with

joy ; and the parents shed tears. Maria was astonished to find herself almost as tall as her father ; she did not understand how her mother could have changed so much and grown so much older ; and she inquired the name of the young man. " Why it is our neighbour's Andrew," said Martin ; " but how comes it that you have returned so unexpectedly after seven long years ? Where have you been ? Why have you not let us hear anything of you ?"

" Seven years ?"—said Maria, and could not come to herself in her thoughts and recollections ; " seven whole years ?"

" Ay, ay," said Andrew, laughing, as he shook her heartily by the hand ; " I have won, Maria, I have been to the pear-tree and back, seven years ago, and you are so slow that you have just got here to-day !"

They began to ask her anew, they pressed her to tell, but she, remembering her promise, could give no answer. They put the story into her mouth almost, that she had lost her way, had been taken up by a passing wagon, and carried to a strange place at a distance, where she had not been able to designate the place where her parents lived : that they had afterwards carried her to a very distant city, where good people had loved her and brought her up ; that they were now dead, and that she at length had recollected the place of her birth, had taken an opportunity to make the journey, and returned.

" Be that as it may," exclaimed her mother ; " it is enough that we have thee again, my darling, my only child !"

Andrew staid to supper, and Maria could not as yet collect her ideas at all. The house seemed to her small and gloomy, she wondered at her dress, which appeared

to her neat and simple, but altogether strange; she examined the ring on her finger; the gold shone wonderfully, and enclosed in fine workmanship a burning red stone. To her father's question she answered that the ring also was a gift from her benefactor.

She was rejoiced when bed-time came, and hastened to rest. The next day she felt more collected, her ideas were better arranged, and she was better able to answer to the inquiries of the people of the village who all came to welcome her. Andrew was there with the first, and showed himself extremely active, joyful and obliging. The blooming maiden of fifteen had made a deep impression on him, and he had passed the night without sleep. The gentry at the castle sent for Maria, and she had to tell her whole story over again to them: the old gentleman and his good lady were astonished at her good breeding, for she was modest, without being embarrassed; she answered politely and in good language all the questions that were put to her; her shyness before great folks and in their houses had disappeared, for when she compared these halls and the people in them with the wonders and high beauty which she had seen among the Elves in their secret dwelling-place, this earthly splendour seemed but dim to her, and the presence of the people insignificant. The young gentlemen particularly were charmed by her beauty.

It was in February. The trees leaved out earlier than usual, the nightingale had never arrived so soon, the spring came on finer than within the memory of the oldest people. Everywhere the rivulets gushed forth and watered the meadows and pastures; the hills seemed to grow, the vine-trellises raised themselves higher,

the fruit-trees blossomed as never before, and a swelling perfumed bounty hung heavy in blossom-clouds over the country. Every thing prospered above expectation, no black day, no storm injured the fruit; the wine swelled blushing in enormous grapes, and the inhabitants of the place looked at each other in astonishment, and felt as if it were a pleasant dream. The next year was just so, but they were already more accustomed to the prodigy. In the autumn Maria yielded to the entreaties of Andrew and her parents; she was betrothed to him, and in the winter they were married.

Often she thought with inward longing of her sojourn behind the fir-trees; she continued silent and serious. However beautiful everything might be that surrounded her, still she knew of something more beautiful, and hence a slight sadness disposed her mind to a soft melancholy. Painful was it to her when her father and her husband spoke of the gypsies and vagabonds who lived in the dark hollow; she often wished to defend them, since she knew that they were the benefactors of the neighbourhood, particularly against Andrew, who appeared to take delight in scolding loudly about them, but she kept back the word each time within her breast. Thus the year passed, and in the next she was rejoiced by the birth of a little daughter, whom she named Elfrida, having in her mind the name of the Elves.

The young folks lived in the same house with Martin and Bridget, as the house was large enough: and they helped their parents to carry on their extended establishment. The little Elfrida soon showed remarkable powers and talents, for she learned to walk very early, and could say something before she was a year old: but af-

ter a few years she was so wise and sensible, and of such wonderful beauty, that all persons looked on her with astonishment, and her mother could not help thinking she looked like the glittering children in the fir-hollow. Elfrida did not like to go with other children, but anxiously avoided their noisy plays, and preferred being alone. Then she retired into a corner of the garden, and read or sewed busily; often she might be seen too, sitting as if in deep meditation, or running quickly back and forth in the garden, and talking to herself. Both her parents willingly let her alone, for she was healthy and thriving, but her singularly intelligent answers or remarks often made them uneasy.

“Such bright children” grandmother Bridget would say, “do not grow up; they are too good for this world, and this child too is beautiful above nature, and will not be able to get along on earth.”

J. E. C.

DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING.

WHAT a little troop are trudging through the snow, some with chairs, some with crickets, and some with tables on their heads; what can they be doing? Where are they going? How rosy their cheeks and their fingers are; they seem not to know it is frosty weather! their eyes glisten like diamonds and their teeth show like pearls—some beautiful errand they must be upon I am sure. Ah! I know what the errand is. They have just turned into a little gate and taken off their head dresses

of chairs, crickets, and tables, and put them down carefully outside the door, and now I see a kind looking woman coming to take them into the pretty cottage ; she looks like the mother of the children ; and now again I see two boys bringing a chest ; it seems pretty heavy, and they are glad to place it down on the ground ; and now they have gone down the same road they came up, and so have all the other children big and little. I see the mother again, taking in the chest, and I can see through the window that she has opened it and taken out some articles ; she seems to be arranging things in the room, and now she is looking out for the boys again, and for the little girls who brought the things on their heads. Here they are again with various articles ; one has a pitcher, another a dipper, and another a saucepan, and the two boys have a large bundle, large enough and unshapeable enough for a bed ; it is tied round the middle by a cord, and no doubt it is a bed ; I hope a bedstead is forthcoming ; ay ! I see one already in the room, and now boys and girls are all in the house running to and fro as busy as bees when they get into a new hive. But all is not over, I see them looking out down the lane as if they expected to see something. Here they come ! here they come ! all cry out. Who is it that is coming ? It is a poor woman with a good warm cloak on that covers her and the little child in her arms, and there is walking beside her a little boy and a little girl, not with rosy but with pale cheeks, and the poor woman looks worn, but as she comes near the pretty cottage a smile comes into her face and she looks happy ; the little boy too and his sister brighten up, and the red comes into their cheeks as they go into the house and see a nice fire on the hearth, and

little crickets to sit upon, and a pretty paper upon the walls, and every thing looking so bright and so clean. The poor mother was too happy to speak ; she sat down in a chair, and the tears came into her eyes as she looked upon all the nice and comfortable things she saw around her. She had left a miserable room where she and her family had slept and cooked and washed, and this *one* room was dark and cold, the walls were dirty, and the wind came through the cracks. As she looked into the face of the kind friend who had removed her from her comfortless home to the one she was now in, it seemed to her as if she were looking upon an angel. To the children it was as a new world. They were all dressed in clean, warm clothes : the miserable dirty rags that they had worn before, were left in the poor room they had now left forever. It was the day before thanksgiving. Soon they were all comfortably settled in their new abode. The little folks who had with their mother helped this poor family to move into the nice cottage, now took leave of them. How happily did they go to bed that night, and what a beautiful thanksgiving had they prepared for themselves. The pies and the puddings, that they had seen preparing a week before, had not given them one half the pleasure they now felt as they thought over and talked over, the change that had aken place in this family, which their father and mother had befriended. What added to their delight, was their going over on thanksgiving day to carry some of the good things they had at home to their friends in the cottage. As for the poor woman and children, we can easily guess what a true thanksgiving they had.

S. C. C.

A NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

WE have begun the year of our Lord *eighteen hundred and forty-six*. By saying "the year of our Lord," we mean that it is eighteen hundred and forty-six years since our Saviour came into the world.

As the year 1846 is so near at hand, the question naturally arises, How shall we begin the new year?

Whether we work, or whether we play, if we wish to do any thing well, it is very important to make *a good beginning*.

When you learn to read or write, or study any particular science, or even try to understand any favorite game, you will do all these things much better, if you only make a good beginning.

If a man intends to build a good house, he must plan it well and lay a good foundation: in other words, to build a good house, it is necessary to make a good beginning.

By these remarks, I wish to gain your distinct attention to what seems indeed a very simple truth, that the first step towards doing any thing well, is, to make a good beginning.

This principle of making a good beginning, is a very valuable one, in regard to the use that we make of our time.

The great God who made us, has given us our time in divided portions: He has commanded the sun, moon and stars to mark it for us. In the beginning he said, "Let the lights of the firmament be for days, and for seasons, and for months, and for years."

Thus it comes to pass, that as often as the light of day returns, we have the opportunity of beginning again to do right. "When the beams of the morning sun strike through your eyelids," says Mrs. Barbauld, "begin the day with praising God, who has taken care of you through the night." I can imagine a well-disposed child, saying, as he leaves his chamber in the morning, "This day I will try to do the will of God. Yesterday, I was not so kind as I ought to have been;—to-day, let me be as kind and pleasing as I can be, to my brothers, sisters and play-fellows." Such a child makes a good beginning of the *day*.

Each succeeding week of our life brings with it the calm and quiet Sabbath. If we spend this day as we should do, in the worship of our heavenly Father, and a proper degree of serious thought, we shall be prepared to act our part aright on the six following days. "I am told," says a thoughtful boy, "that my disposition is proud. Have I been proud during the week that has passed? In the coming week, I will bear in mind that Sunday lesson, in which I find the words of Jesus: 'Blessed are the meek: Blessed are the poor in spirit: Blessed are the peacemakers.'" In this manner does the thoughtful boy make a good beginning of the *week*.

I have represented the well-disposed child and the thoughtful boy, as first looking back to consider how they have spent the time gone by, and then looking forward with good resolutions for the time to come. This is the kind of serious thought which is necessary, if we would advance in knowledge and virtue. We all have need frequently to correct the errors of the past, and again and again to renew our resolutions to do well. Even

the best of children may say sometimes in the words of the hymn :

“ But how my childhood runs to waste !

My sins how great their sum !

Lord ? give me pardon for the past,

And strength for days to come.”

And this, I think, is the proper spirit in which to begin the *New Year*. As you remember with regret, the faults and deficiencies of eighteen hundred and forty-five, resolve that you will overcome them in eighteen hundred and forty-six. And if you think, that in eighteen hundred and forty-five you have done some things well, still resolve that in eighteen hundred and forty-six you will strive on, as did the holy child Jesus, “ to grow in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.” So much for a good beginning of the *year*.

But you, my young friends, are now in the dawn and beginning of *life*. You are so happy as to be yet children. You have yet scarcely left the flowery garden of infancy :

“ *Life* is all before you, where to choose,
And Providence your guide.”

You have before you the precious opportunity of making a *good beginning of life*. Your parents and teachers give you good instruction now, that if, unhappily, you should hereafter do wrong, these instructions may be a means of leading you back to your duty ; and if you should do well, that they may encourage you, and help you on your way. For, as you grow up to be men and women you will learn that in after years, the mind often turns back with mingled power and tenderness, to the good instructions and good resolutions of early days. The

Rev. John Newton relates, that when by a course of evil conduct, he had been reduced so low as to become a slave on the coast of Africa, he then remembered the prayers his mother had uttered, and the holy lessons she had taught him in childhood. So that after being a wicked man some years, the good instructions of his childhood revived: he repented of his sins, and became, at length, a pious man, and a minister of the gospel, because his mother had taught him to make a good beginning of *life*.

We learn from the New Testament, that there lived eighteen hundred years ago, an excellent and interesting young man, whom the Apostle Paul so much admired and loved, that he called him his own son in the truth. His name was Timothy, and he was the first bishop of the Church of the Ephesians. St. Paul praises him for abiding in the faith of his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, and for having from a child, known the Holy Scriptures. Young Timothy had made a good beginning of *life*.

As the Scriptures were written for our learning, let us go back in the Scripture History another thousand years.

Two thousand eight hundred years ago, lived king Solomon. On first coming to his throne, the young king went up to the high place at Gibeon, to worship before the King of kings. And the King of kings spoke kindly to the young king, and said to him, "Ask now what I shall give thee." "And Solomon said unto God, Give, I pray thee, to thy servant, a wise and understanding heart, that I may judge thy people. And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thy heart,

and thou hast not asked for riches, or honor, or long life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself; wisdom and knowledge are granted unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." Thus did king Solomon become the wisest of men, and excel all the kings of the earth in riches and honor, because he made *a good beginning* of his reign.

But unhappily, when Solomon grew old, he suffered his heart to be drawn away from God. That wise preacher, who had said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence," suffered evil to enter in, and injure his own soul. When he came to repent of his departure from God, he appears to have called to mind the innocent scenes of his childhood, the pious instructions of his father, and his mother's tender love. "For," says he, "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me, and said unto me, let thine heart retain my words, keep my commandments and live." Then, in the bitterness of his heart, contrasting the innocence of his childhood with the follies of his age, he exclaims, "A wise child is better than an old and foolish king."

Solomon is remarkable in his writings for his frequent addresses to young people; and in his closing book, called Ecclesiastes, anxious it would seem, to save them from the snares into which himself had fallen, he advises them, in very impressive language, to make *a good beginning* of life. Listen to the solemn parting words of this great and wise king. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the

years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;—but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment."

I shall make but one more application of this doctrine of a good beginning. As an innocent childhood and a virtuous youth, are a good beginning of life, so, if we seek day by day, week by week, and year by year, to attain holiness and virtue, the whole of this our mortal life will be only *a beginning*, though a *blessed and happy beginning*, of that life which shall be everlasting.

H.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

THE obvious analogy between the course of life and the progress of the wayfarer and pilgrim, is never more striking, than at the commencement of the new year; when even the most thoughtless can scarcely refrain from surveying the path already travelled, and looking forth on that which still lays before them. Instead of a tale for their amusement only, we therefore present our readers with the following instructive reflections of Chrysostom, upon the touching declaration of Holy writ, that we are strangers and sojourners.

"Let us therefore overcome the world, and run the race of immortality—let us follow our king and set up our trophy under him—let us despise the pleasures of

this world. Laborious effort is not demanded ; transfer your souls to heaven, and the whole world is subdued— if we cease to desire it, it is overcome, if we condemn it, it is vanquished. We are strangers and sojourners, therefore let no vexations disquiet us. Wert thou the citizen of some illustrious country and descended from renowned ancestors, but visiting a remote land, where thou wast known to no one, and hadst neither children nor estate, should any one insult thee, thou wouldst be less sensible to the affront than when at home. The certain knowledge that thou wast in a strange and foreign country, would induce thee to bear with facility all inconveniences, to disregard even hunger and thirst and every suffering. Let the same reflection attend thee now—thou art a stranger and sojourner, therefore be distressed at nothing that can befall thee in this foreign land, for thou possessest a city whose builder and maker is God—thine absence from home is only for the briefest period. Let him who will, insult, revile and smite thee. We are in a strange land, and must fare meanly,—the disgrace would be, to endure these things in our own country and among our own citizens—that indeed would be the extremity of shame and ignominy. But where no one knows us, we may easily submit to any thing ; insolence becoming intolerable only when he who inflicts it does so purposely, knowing who we are. Let us now remember, that they who affront us are ignorant that we are citizens of heaven, registered in the country above, fellow choristers with the cherubim. Did they know us, we should not be insulted ; but they mistake us for vagabonds and beggars, let us not consider this as an insult directed to ourselves. Tell me, would any one who was upon a journey, and had arrived at the

inn a little before his servants, consider himself as affronted, if while waiting for them, other travellers or the inn-keeper himself, not knowing who he was, should treat him with neglect or insolence? Would he not rather smile at their ignorance and be amused at their mistake? Let such be our deportment. In this world, we are sitting in a caravansera, waiting for our companions who are travelling the same road—when all shall be collected together, those who have despised us will discover whom they have insulted. Then they will hang their heads in shame, and ask, ‘Can this be he whom we, fools that we were! treated with contempt?’

We may comfort ourselves therefore with these two considerations, first, that it is not we who are insulted since men know not who we are; and secondly, if we desire revenge, (though far from us be that cruel disposition!) that when our characters are discovered, they who have derided us will suffer the severest mortification.”

II. ALMS-GIVING.

At this season of good wishes and kind remembrances, of liberality towards friends and charity to the stranger and the needy, there is a peculiar fitness in offering to our young readers from the same ancient source, the following commendation of the virtue of beneficence and alms-giving. If any of them are conversant with the pages of ecclesiastical history, they have learned that in the centuries succeeding Chrysostom, this virtue swelled into such inordinate estimation, as to be deemed of sufficient efficacy to cancel the vilest crimes; and perhaps the praises here bestowed on it by the eloquent bishop,

are more fervent than the moderation of our modern pulpits would favor. But we doubt not that the passage will gain the admiration of our warm-hearted young friends, and that when they take from their own abundance at this inclement season to clothe the shivering limbs of the naked and feed the hungry, they will remember the brilliant parallel here drawn between the Jewish altar, with its solemn pomp of priests and sacrifices and awful sanctuary, and the lowly suffering members of Christ's mystic body.

“ *The Merciful Man*—he may not, indeed, be arrayed in sacred vestments, nor carry tinkling bells, nor wear a crown—but he is clothed in the robe of charity, more sacred than the priest's garments; he is anointed with oil composed of no earthly ingredients—it is the unction of the spirit—he wears the crown of tender mercy (as it is said, ‘ *Who hath crowned thee with loving kindness and tender mercies*’) and instead of bearing a frontlet inscribed with the name of God, he himself becomes like God—Ask ye, how this can be?—‘ *So,*’ says our Saviour, ‘ *ye shall be like your Father who is in Heaven.*’ Shall I show you his altar?—Not Bezaleel nor any human artist was its builder—it was erected by God himself, and consists, not of stones, but materials brighter than the heavens—of feeling, thinking spirits. The high priest alone might enter into the Holy of holies—but by offering the sacrifice of which we are now speaking, thou mayest enter a privacy still more dread and sacred, where no eye can behold thee but His who seeth in secret. Ask ye, how the being seen of men can be avoided, when the altar is in public? Ye remember that doors and curtains, in the Jewish temple, secured the

sanctuary against intruders ; but here, while offering thy sacrifice before the eyes of men, thou mayest enjoy a seclusion still more sacred and awful than that of the Holy of holies. For if thou performest thine alms, not with a *view* to be seen of men, though the whole world were spectators, it is to thee as though no one beheld them. Thus when our Saviour commanded us not to do our alms before men, he added the words, *to be seen of them*.

The altar of which we speak, is composed of the members of Christ—thy Master's body therefore becomes thine altar ; let it be revered by thee ! It may be seen in every place, in the narrow street and the spacious forum, and sacrifices may be offered on it every hour. If thou wouldst behold it, come hither, and I will show it to thee. Observe the smoke and sweet fragrance of this altar. It is the breath of thanksgiving and praise. Ask ye how high it rises ? It ascends above the firmament, above the heaven of heavens, and stops not till it has reached the throne of God. *Thine alms and thy prayers*, saith the Scriptures, *have come up before God*. While the fragrance of material sacrifices penetrates but a small portion of the atmosphere, this opens for itself a passage through the flooring of the heavens. Thou mayest be silent, but thy works cry aloud. Let the poor man therefore be regarded by thee as an altar, upon which thou mayest offer the sacrifice of praise to God."

L. O.

"THE Christian religion," says Novalis, in words which frequent quotation has rendered familiar to us, "is the root of all democracy—the highest fact in the Rights of Man."

MY MOTHER'S SPIRIT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF HERDER.

"BRIGHTLY beaming upon a cloud of the setting sun, descended a Cherub to announce to my mother's spirit that it must come to God. Undismayed it listened to the call, like a youthful hero summoned to the palace, to receive his laurels from the hand of the monarch for whom he has won his victories. Gladly it left the body, and rising in the air thus addressed it.

'O true companion, we must now separate. Poor hut of clay, which sin has inhabited with me, thou must now fall in pieces. Thou, mine earthly man, so long scarred with her bloody scourging, must now lie prostrate.

The gay flowers, the pretty shining cockle-shells which we have gathered with one another along the seashore of ebbing time, and with which we have filled our robes and aprons, must now fade and pass away with thee.

Thine eyes have wept for thine own and the transgressions of others; no more will they be tearfully raised to heaven, from whence came thy help.

No more wilt thou be compelled to stoop to petty tyrants, haughty in proportion to their littleness, nor to sport with the children of folly upon earth's surface.

Those hands which ministered to the necessities of the saints, those feet which trod no path but that which led to the house of God, now peacefully rest. The curtain of a deep midnight is drawn around thee.

Happy, happy art thou, Oh my body! an ocean-wave has broken over thee, and has cast thee upon the shore

where thou art safe. Henceforth thou art beyond all danger of wandering in forbidden paths, of doing or receiving wrong.

Thou long tried ! rest for a little space only, in the cool bosom of the earth ; have patience until thy bones have crumbled into dust in the solitude of the grave. Crowned with rays of glory, thou shalt speedily come forth into those still pastures of peace, in comparison with which, all the beauty thou hast beheld will seem like a dim shadow.

Blow, cooling breezes, blow over it from these olive heights. Decay, deal gently with it ! And thou, my guardian angel, brood over it with thy wings, until the day-dawn of eternity arise.'

So spake the spirit of my loved mother, and winged its flight. Her guardian angel, while with radiant finger he pointed out her starry path, thus answered ; Departing spirit, I will remain with thy body until thou art re-united to it in fairer wedlock. I will permit no suffering nor ill to harm it. All its pains are now allayed. See, my pilgrim-staff I lean against this cypress tree ; my wings I lay aside, that I may not withdraw from it, until renewed with the second earth, it shall appear before Messiah, and not fear to call him brother—until it shall regain its companion in the kingdom of love."

L. O.

A MORNING VISITOR.

Nor form nor substance in my being share,
I'm neither fire nor water, earth nor air ;
From nature's force alone my birth derive,
I ne'er can die, for ne'er was made alive,

And yet with such extensive empire reign,
That very few escape my magic chain.

Nor time nor place my wild excursions bound,
I break all order, nature's laws confound,
Raise tricks without contrivance or design,
And make apparent contradictions join,
Transfer the Thames where Ganges' waters roll,
Unite th' Equator to the Frozen Pole ;
Midst Zembla's ice bid flushing rubies glow,
And British harvests bloom in Scythian snow.
When nature lies deformed in wintry frost,
And all the beauties of the Spring be lost,
Raised by my power new verdure decks the ground,
And smiling flowers diffuse their sweets around.
The sleeping dead I summon from the tomb,
And oft anticipate the living's doom ;
Convey offenders to the fatal tree
When law or stratagem had set them free.

Awed by no check my roving flight can soar
Beyond Imagination's active power.
I view each country of the spacious earth ;
Nay, visit realms which never yet had birth ;
Can trace the trackless regions of the air,
And fly with ease beyond the starry sphere.
So swift my operations,—in an hour
I can destroy a town or build a tower,
Play tricks would puzzle all the search of wit,
And show whole volumes which were never writ.
In sure record my mystic power's confessed,
Which racked with cares a haughty tyrant's breast.
Charged in propheetic emblems to relate
Approaching wrath, and his peculiar fate.
Oft to the good, by Heaven in mercy sent,
I've armed their thoughts against some dire event ;
And oft in chains presumptuous villains bind,
And haunt with restless care the guilty mind.

[“ Stray Leaves from Fairy Land ” : London.

STATUARY.

TRANSLATED FROM MADAM SCHOPENHAUER'S TRAVELS.

"We saw at a poor peasant woman's near the town of Vienne, the loveliest marble group of children that could be imagined, perfect even to the smallest details, and in excellent preservation; the most surprising thing was, that the woman herself had found it in the earth, about a year and a half before, when digging in her vineyard, hardly two feet beneath the surface. She was quite willing to bring forth her 'angels,' as she called them, from her chest, where wrapped in green crape, they lay softly imbedded in her Sunday clothes. The group represents two boys, from one to two years old, nearly as large as life; the eldest is holding with his left hand a bird, closely pressed to his bosom, and with his outstretched arm is keeping off his little brother, who wants to pull the bird away from him, and finding that he cannot get possession of it, is biting his arm with childish petulance. The elder boy seems to feel no pain from the bite of the impotent suckling, and looks half laughing on his unavailing wrath. Nothing can be imagined more lovely than these little figures, the heads, the expression and the attitude. A tree stands by the side of the children; near the eldest, a snake is gliding up; and near the youngest, a lizard is climbing, which snaps at a butterfly. One wing only of the bird, and a finger of the youngest boy are missing in this ancient and inexpressibly attractive specimen of art; in other respects it is entirely uninjured.

Many who view this group, find in it all manner of allegories, but M. Schneider conjectures, and perhaps with reason, that it represents the portraits of the two children of some wealthy distinguished Roman, who had probably accidentally seen them in this very situation, and caused it to be copied by some master-hand; the snake, the lizard, and the butterfly he considers as arbitrary, insignificant decorations by the artist. The owner of the group was delighted with our admiration of it. She kissed her angels, wrapped them up again in the green veil and carefully put them to bed. Poor as she is, she is not yet willing to sell them. Should some rich English Lord offer her a purse full of guineas, she thought she might be tempted to give up her angels, though it would be hard to part with them; but she refused to take any thing for her trouble in showing them to travellers, and we could with difficulty persuade her to receive a compensation."

L. O.

ASMUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, BY F. K. BUTLER.

THAT portion of the Halmenkam, a chain of mountains running between the vallies of the Altmuhl and Womitz and ending towards the south on the left shore of the Danube—which belongs to the county Pappenheim, is surrounded by a high table land. Before the all cultivating hand of our century had touched this region, it retained the primeval stamp impressed upon it by the Creator, and presented the aspect of a tract in some

Spanish sierra over which flocks of brown sheep grazed at will. Where the heath terminated among juniper bushes were seen groups of towering pine trees, which shooting up their palm-like crests, free from all underbrush, appeared from afar to be hovering undetached in the air, so much the sturdier seemed the mighty growth of oaks which stretched their arms all round over the chase, and with but few exceptions were branded from topmost branch to the root with lightning scars of a hand's breadth.

The shepherd-boys who ate and slept and sported beneath them, never beheld a cloudless sky, for they imagined in their simplicity that the Tyrolean Alps, which were descried in the far distance over Suabia and Bavaria, by the clear morning and evening light, were mere vapors of the air like the clouds. In many of the hollows of this table land gush living springs, which not being strong enough to carry their course as far as the Attmuhl, lose themselves in the neighboring meadows. They accomplish their destiny in supplying drink for the herdsmen and their cattle, and preserving the lives of certain insects who wander on the water as others of their kind do on the earth, and make their lurking holes under the evergreen leaves of the water cresses. In the neighborhood of one of these brooks are the traces of a Roman colony or camp; at least so think the antiquaries of those parts upon the strength of certain medals and apparent fortifications which have been dug up. It is certain, however, that these springs influenced the establishment of later settlers, as the situation of the two principal villages on the table land abundantly testifies. The largest of these, Langenaltheim, had besides the principal

church in the middle of the place, a small chapel with a tower and belfry on the outskirts of the village, in which if I am not mistaken, a communion service was performed only once in the year on Maundy Thursday. The village church was moreover more richly endowed than any other in the county. The origin of this wealth and the occasion on which the little chapel with tower and bell was erected, is the subject of a tradition which the author will now relate for the benefit of such as have nothing better to read. As in later times the Jura has been famous for its watchmakers, so as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, Langenalthheim was renowned for its needles. The art of manufacturing these smallest of tools had found its way southward from Nuremberg, and had been gladly taken up by the inhabitants of the Halmenkam, inasmuch as its population had gradually increased so much that the mere cultivation of the soil no longer sufficed for their maintenance. These village artisans however only carried their manufacture to the point where the polishing process commences, which last process devolved upon the needle-seller of Pappenheim by whom they were employed. The needlers of the Halmenkam were all professed bird-catchers, and moreover the common voice went, that they not unfrequently employed the thick wire ends left from the making of the large sail needles to construct springes sufficiently powerful to hold not only a small hare, but a stout buck. At least the traps that had been found by the foresters were for the most part fastened to two strong young trees bent to the ground, and would have been exceedingly dangerous to any one who inadvertently

treading on one of them, might be caught up and suddenly suspended by the arm or leg.

At that time when the forests of the county were full of foxes, stags, and wild boar, old and young, which swarmed there like flies in a peasant's hut, these traps seldom remained long empty. In the cottage of one of these artisans in Langenaltheim, at the east end of the village towards Solenhofen, the 24th of December, 1573, was ushered in with the same sort of scene that is wont to be enacted in our own times on the holy Christmas Eve. After the morning prayer had been said, and the morning meal of panada saturated with milk instead of lard had been despatched, the father slipped himself without doublet into a cloak of coarse unbleached woollen, packed the needles that he had finished during the week in a small black bag, and started on his way toward Pappenheim—one of those active and hardy pedestrians that one may still occasionally encounter of a Saturday afternoon coming up from some glen or over some ridge of the Halmenkam, on the road to Attmuhl. As soon as he was gone the good wife began her work; she watered the Christmas tree, a stout linden bough that stood luxuriantly covered with leaves and blossoms; she fed the poultry which had taken up their winter quarters in a back corner under the bedstead; strewed white sand under table, bench and stool; swept the kitchen floor with a strong besom, and dusted the books on the shelf above the door among which stood a new folio Bible of 1566, undivided into verses and ornamented with wood cuts.

Four children from seven to two years old, and a couple of familiar water wag-tails, retired before the scolding voice and threatening besom of the housewife from

corner to corner, until, after sundry processions they took peaceable possession of the recess behind the stove. What the Christ-child would give their father to bring home for them, was the subject of conversation between the three elder boys, while the little two-year-old stammered out the heads of the discourse after them. The small shirt that was his only garment, covered him about as little as the schoolmaster's short cloak of ceremony at a funeral, and hung down before him merely for form's sake.

His three brothers were better provided; they had hose of black and shirts of white ticking, and a ticking suspender was the third member of this clothes' confederacy.

Their father meanwhile went cheerily on his forest path. The serene dawn that was brightening the country all round him, reflected itself in his soul which rejoiced in the Lord. Nature seemed to be preparing such a green Christmas Eve as had never been seen before in that climate. The trailing branches of the blackberry bushes, and the young shoots of the wild brier still wore most of their leaves, and the rustling of the lizards was heard among the withered ones beneath. The black woodpecker with his blood-red crest flew screaming into the wood from one old oak to another, and knocked at them all to lure the curious inhabitants to the windows of their deep dwellings within. The colored jay chattered over some acorn or nut hidden in the days of abundance, and now brought to light again. The titmice sported in family groups from one beech or fir tree to another, and the whole forest seemed like some great public pleasure garden from which the company had

departed, leaving only the mountebanks and merry-andrews behind.

The needler however formed an honorable exception to our comparison. He sang the three first verses of John Matthesin's morning hymn, beginning "From my heart's depths I sing thee thanks and praise," and probably he would have accomplished the four remaining verses, but in the by-path, diverging from the main road into which he had now turned, he came upon a buck that was caught in a wire trap and had almost wounded and beaten itself to death. Asmus, for that was the needler's name, laid down the little wallet that he was carrying on a stick over his shoulder, in order to set the captured beast at liberty. But in endeavoring to do this, he found that the gin had broken one of the poor creature's fore legs, and made a deep gash in its throat. A speedy death was, under these circumstances, the greatest kindness to the captive, and this he gave it with the knife which, according to the common fashion of the time, he carried in his pouch. The thought of appropriating the venison to himself never entered his mind, neither indeed had he leisure to determine whether to leave it lying there or drag it after him to Pappenheim, for as he raised himself up from giving the poor beast the mercy stroke, two foresters sprang out of the firs close by, where they had been lurking, and seized the supposed poacher. Without bestowing any other answer on his defence but "It's all right—we shall soon see,"—one of them held him while the other took the stag out of the springe, and tying his four feet together with a dog leash, threw it over the needler's head. Bare-headed, his hands bound to the buck, and covered all over with its blood, poor

Asmus was dragged down the mountain, and through the little town of Poppenheim, to the castle, where the earls at that time still resided. Many a citizen threw up his window in the Jew and cloister streets as he saw the man led by, and said to the dames who stood peeping on tiptoe behind their husbands, because they had not yet donned their day coif—"See, see—Asmus has been caught tripping at last; he'll bore no more needle eyes, and the ravens will soon sing his requiem." Arrived at the castle, the needler was, till further notice, lowered by a rope into a subterranean prison. As he remained below and the cord was drawn up, a heavy stone cover fell over the round aperture of the dungeon, as over a vault. This dungeon was situated in the lowest part of a Roman tower which remains even to this day, and one half of which descended as deep into the rock as the other rose high above it.

Here the prisoner heard nothing but his own breathing, and enjoyed about as much daylight as the mole who withdraws himself from the winter's cold into the innermost chamber of his labyrinth. The temperature of this prison was however that of a dry and pleasant cellar in the cold season, and the atmosphere perfectly pure and free from damp. But the friendly reader who has followed poor Asmus to the castle-dungeon, will hear more gladly of his spiritual condition than of his outward surroundings, and indeed where space and color fail, there is little left to describe.

For both reasons, therefore, the author proceeds without further delay. The prisoner was a second Peter in durance; he neither gave himself up to black despair, nor to loud complaints and lamentations. The anchor of

his soul had laid fast hold upon the fatherly truth and power of God, so that he believed as firmly that even under the earth and beneath the stony covering he was still in the ken of the All-seeing and All-caring one, as in the existence of his ten fingers; which however he could not see by reason of the Egyptian darkness of his dungeon. He felt as certain of his release whether by a judgment of acquittal or whether by death as if it had already happened; so that he could say with Jonah in the depths of the sea, "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about: even to the soul: the depths closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever, yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto Thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

The prisoner was moreover so fully persuaded and so confirmed in the belief of an invisible companion, that the thought of his being alone and without witnesses was remote from his mind. He cherished the most intimate and lively conviction that besides the Omnipresent Lord, a being beheld him who knew, felt for, and commiserated

him in his imprisonment—and this was his good angel. He felt so assured of this that he conversed with him as with a fellow prisoner, and said in his heart: "My brother, we are now in the lion's den, and it grieves me to the heart that thou, without sin, shouldst be here, where my transgressions and sins have brought me. If thou hadst had nought to do with me, poor miserable child of man, thou mightest yet wander beneath the shining stars, and hear sweeter music than my sighing. But tarry yet awhile by me, I pray thee; and when thou shalt have borne my soul into Abraham's bosom, when I shall have joined the children of the resurrection, then will I wait on thee; and if to-day be my last, greet thou for me the angels of my wife and children, and beseech them in my name not to grow weary of helping the widow and the orphans." While Asmus uttered this greeting to his invisible companion, a ray of light suddenly fell upon his face and on the wall of the tower beside him. It appeared as though it made its way through the fissures between the free-stone masses of the wall. Asmus, who in his quiet and all-accepting faith nothing doubted that whatever had at any time befallen the children of God, was yet perfectly possible in his own case, thought that it might befall him even as it did the apostle in Herod's prison, and that the glory of the Lord was already beginning to irradiate his dark dungeon.

At the same moment, however, a door that Asmus had not perceived in the darkness, creaked on its unoiled hinges, and a large old man entered the dungeon, carrying a lantern in his hand, and bowed as though he had come all the way through the subterranean passage from the village to the tower.

[To be continued.]